

1. A system for helping a user select among program options, comprising:
  - a first device programmed to accept information from the user on programming preferences;
  - 5 a database which accepts and stores programming preference information from the collecting client;
  - a server which combines information from the database with listings information and formats that information for presentation to the user; and
  - a second device which accepts the formatted listings information from the server and presents it to the user.
2. The system of claim 1 where there are at least two first devices.
3. The system of claim 1 where the first device is the same as the second device.
4. The system of claim 1 where the presenting client does not run on the same device as the server.
- 15 5. The system of claim 1 where the clients communicate with the server over a wide area network.
6. The system of claim 1 where the formatted listings information is presented in the form of a user preference grid.
7. A method of presenting program listings information in a two dimensional grid, the method comprising the steps of:
  - creating a two dimensional grid where one axis represents the time slots in which programs are available and a second axis represents a suggested preference order of the programs in each time slot; and
  - 20 displaying the grid to a user.

8. A computer user interface for presenting programming listings information comprising:

instructions for creating a two dimensional grid where one axis represents the time slots in which programs are available and a second axis represents a suggested preference order of the programs in each time slot; and

instructions for displaying the grid to a user.

9. The computer user interface of claim 8 wherein the suggested preference order is determined, at least in part, based on personal preference information.
10. The computer user interface of claim 8 further comprising instructions to select a program and have all conflicting program options eliminated from the grid.
11. A displayed time-by-suggested preference program grid.
12. A data structure programmed to represent a time-by-suggested preference program grid.
13. A device for displaying a program grid to a user, the device programmed to:  
receive program preference information; and  
display a grid of programs with time as a first axis and suggested preference as a second axis.
14. The device of claim 12 further programmed to:  
receive information on available programs; and  
generate the display of the grid from the program preference information and the information on available programs.
15. The device of claim 12 or 13 wherein the program preference information is received from a user.
16. The device of claim 12 or 13 wherein the program preference information is received from a server.

17. A server for generating program preference information, the server programmed to:
- send and receive program preference information;
  - send and receive information on available programs; and
  - generate and send data sufficient to create a grid of programs with time as a first axis and suggested preference as a second axis.

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